

*Hopewell Junction, NY* – Standing with Hopewell Junction families who have suffered from cancer and other health problems due to groundwater contamination and vapor intrusion by the carcinogenic chemical trichloroethylene (TCE), U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19) today unveiled legislation to help communities deal with TCE contamination. The TCE Reduction Act, which Hall is introducing with U.S. Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY22), would require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set stricter regulations to protect the public from exposure to TCE.

"Growing scientific evidence shows the danger TCE pollution poses to people," said Congressman Hall. "Yet the EPA continues to drag its feet instead of setting a new standard that would help the residents of Hopewell Junction and similar communities throughout the country."

TCE and other contaminants have plagued Hopewell Junction residents as the result of Hopewell Precision's disposal of painting and degreasing wastes directly on the ground, resulting in a 1.5 mile long groundwater contamination plume. Chemicals have been detected in local drinking water wells and many homes have experienced significant problems caused by vapor intrusion. The site was listed on the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund National Priority List, a list of the most severely polluted sites in the country, in 2005. Yet residents are still suffering from significant TCE contamination.

"TCE is a pervasive, toxic chemical that cannot be allowed to continue to pollute our communities," said Congressman Hall. "Study has shown that it is a likely carcinogen, can cause nerve damage, lead to developmental difficulties in children, and pose a significant threat to public health. We expect our government at all levels to provide security. When the fire alarm rings, we expect the fireman to show up and put the blaze out. EPA is no exception. But what did EPA do when the alarm rang about TCE spill here and throughout the rest of the country? It recommended more study."

In 2001, a draft EPA Risk Assessment found TCE to be as much as 40 times more carcinogenic than previously thought, but instead of setting a more protective standard for TCE in drinking water, the Bush Administration called for more study. The National Research Council (NRC) was directed to conduct an in depth study of the health studies involving TCE. The final NRC report, issued in 2006, found that "the evidence on carcinogenic risk and other health hazards from exposure to trichloroethylene has strengthened since 2001." The report went on to say, "The committee recommends that federal agencies finalize their risk assessment with currently available data so that risk management decisions can be made expeditiously."

"No action has been taken by the EPA to update the water standard," stated Debra Hall of Hopewell Junction Citizens for Clean Water. "There is no federal standard to deal with vapor intrusion even though this is a very dangerous environmental issue. I applaud Congressman Hall for taking action to force stricter regulations related to TCE. People living here in Hopewell Junction and the entire nation will benefit greatly when this bill becomes law. Stricter standards will allow more homes to be mitigated. It is obvious that legislation is needed to force protection against cancer and other health issues that are caused by TCE."

Hopewell Junction resident Sharon Whalen testified that her father developed prostate cancer after living in her home. The house was also dubbed "the sick house" because everyone living there became almost constantly ill. Whalen's home is impacted by vapor intrusion only and at

the highest amount of the entire superfund site.

The TCE Reduction Act addresses both groundwater contamination and vapor intrusion caused by TCE and would require the EPA to:

- Issue a revised health advisory for TCE within 6 months of enactment.
- Issue revised draft health standards for TCE in drinking water within 12 months of enactment, and final drinking water standards within 18 months.
- Issue a health advisory standard for TCE vapor intrusion within 12 months of enactment.
- Establish an integrated risk information system reference concentration for TCE vapor which is protective within 18 months of enactment.
- Ensure that all standards set under the bill fully protect susceptible populations (including pregnant women, infants, and children) from the adverse health affects of TCE.

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